

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1050

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LORENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T ROME 10408

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MZ, VT

SUBJECT: POPE RECEIVEDTHREE MOZAMBIQUE BISHOPS

FROM LODGE

REFERENCE: LORENCO MARQUES 0629

SUMMARY: THREE MOZAMBIQUE BISHOPS CONFIRMED TO POPE THAT MASSACRES UNDOUBTEDLY TOOK PLACE IN TETE LAST DECEMBER. VATICAN DAILY HAS PUBLISHED TEXT OF MOZAMBIQUE BISHOPS' AUG 30 STATEMENT WHICH STRONGLY CONDEMNS METHODS OF PORTUGUESE FORCES. END SUMMARY.

1. POPE PAUL RECEIVED BISHOPS OF NAMPULA, QUELIMANE AND TETE IN PRIVATE AUDIENCE SEPT 13. ENTIRELY RELIABLE VATICAN SOURCE HAS INFORMED US THAT BISHOPS ASSURED POPE THAT BEYOND ANY REASON-ABLE DOUBT MASSACRES HAD TAKEN PLACE NEAR TETE LAST DECEMBER. SOURCE DOUBTED THAT BISHOPS HAD SPECIFIED NUMBER OF VICTIMS, BUT

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THEY DID ASSERT THAT PORTUGUESE TROOPS HAD KILLED MANY UNARMED

VILLAGES IN REPRISAL FOR FRELIMO ATTACK. BISHOP OF TETE TOLD POPE THAT HE HAD VISITED SCENE SHORTLY AFTER MASSACRE AND HAD PERSONALLY BURIED A NUMBER OF VICTIMS.

2. SOURCE SAID THAT, CONTRARY TO RUMORS CIRCULATING ABROAD, MOZAMBIQUE BISHOPS HAVE BEEN VIGOROUSLY PROTESTING INCIDENTS OF TERRORISM AND HAVE SOUGHT ADEQUATE EXPLANATION FROM PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES. ON MARCH 3, EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE WROTE GOVERNOR GENERAL CONCERNING MASSACRES TAKING PLACE IN "REGULADO OF GANDALI" NEAR TETE LAST DECEMBER. LETTER INFORMED GOVERNOR GENERAL THAT BISHOP OF TETE HAD INVESTIGATED INCIDENT TO CONFIRM ITS TRUTH AND HOPED THAT IN FUTURE THERE WOULD BE NO RECURRENCE OF SUCH ACTS WHICH "CONTRAST WITH STANDARD OF MORALITY AND JUSTICE IN MILITARY OPERATIONS". LETTER WENT ON TO CONDEMN SUCH ACTS WHETHER COMMITTED BY ARMED FORCES, FRELIMO OR ANYONE ELSE. EXPRESSING BISHOPS "LIVELY INDIGNATION AND MOST VEHEMENT PROTEST, GIVEN THAT THIS MANNER OF PROCEDURE CONTRASTS MOST RADICALLY WITH MOST ELEMENTARY LAWS OF SOUND MORALITY AND CONTRADICTS LETTER AND SPIRIT OF LAWS WHICH GOVERN US."

3. ON APRIL 3, GOVERNOR GENERAL REPLIED TO BISHOPS CONCERNING "INCIDENT AT GANDAR". GOVERNOR GENERAL REITERATED THAT ARMED FORCES UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO AVOID UNNECESSARY DEATHS, SUFFERING OR INJURY TO POPULATION. HOWEVER, HE ADMITTED THAT, "UNFORTUNATELY IN ZONES WHERE TERRORIST ELEMENTS BLEND WITH POPULATION OR ENJOY THEIR VOLUNTARY OR FORCED SUPPORT," SOME INCIDENTS CAN OCCUR. PERPETRATORS OF SUCH INCIDENTS ARE ALWAYS STRICTLY DEALT WITH BY MILITARY AND AN INQUIRY IS NOW UNDER WAY CONCERNING LAST DECEMBER'S CASE.

4. ABOVE LETTER BY BISHOPS AND GOVERNOR GENERAL'S REPLY COVERED IN AUG 30 STATEMENT OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE WHICH PUBLISHED SEPT 16 IN VATICAN SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILY "OSSERVATORE ROMANO". EDITORIAL COMMENT NOTES THAT THIS STATEMENT HAD BEEN DISSEMINATED BY A NUMBER OF NEWS SERVICES, BUT THAT PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES HAD BANNED ITS PUBLICATION IN PORTUGUESE TERRITORY. BISHOPS STATEMENT CONCLUDES BY RESTATING "REPUGNANCE WHICH THEY FEEL AGAINST ALL ACTS OF VIOLENCE CONTRASTING WITH RIGHTS OF LIFE AND THE HUMAN PERSON AND NOTES THAT BISHOPS CONFERENCE AND EACH BISHOP INDIVIDUALLY ARE PREPARED TO DECLARE, VIA THE MOST APPRO-
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PRIMATE CHANNELS, AGAINST ANY FORM OF INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION WHICH, ABOVE ALL IN CONTEXT OF WAR, MAY BE COMMITTED BY ANY PARTY OF THE STRUGGLE. OUR POSITION IS INSPIRED BY DUTY DERIVING FROM PASTORAL MISSION ENTRUSTED TO US FOR PURPOSE OF CONSOLIDATING IN THE FAITH THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS AND SPREADING GOSPEL WHICH IS THE MESSAGE OF PEACE AND LOVE AMONG PEOPLE OF GOD."
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